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ABSTRACT

This paper delineates an exercise where students are encouraged to give their point of view to a quotation received (the activity is an adaptation from the Impromptu Speaking event in Competitive Forensics). The paper states that students are to explain the meaning of a quotation (topic themes may be from ecology, education, environment, life, relationships, conflict, etc.) and that students must define necessary words, then give reasons of why they agree or disagree. It notes that the objective is to have students understand the basic structure of a formal argument and that this assignment is the first step in getting them to understand the meaning of argument in its most basic form. The paper outlines the procedures for the two class sessions suggested for the assignment; gives the requirements; and discusses the introduction, the body, the conclusion, and grading. Appended are an evaluation form and sample lists of quotations for diverse topics. (NKA)

Point of View Speech (A Speech Assignment in Critical Thinking).

by Michael E. Brydges

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Point of View Speech
(A speech assignment in Critical Thinking)
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An exercise where students are encouraged to give their point of view to a quotation received. This activity is an adaptation from the Impromptu Speaking event in Competitive Forensics (Speech and Debate). Students are to explain the meaning of a quotation (topic themes may be from ecology, education, environment, life, relationships, conflict, etc.). Students must define necessary words, then give said reasons of why they agree or disagree with the author's quotation (see samples on Appendix 1).

Objectives: to have students understand the basic structure of a formal argument. To have students generate beginning claims and understand the importance of a complete sentence to reflect that assertion. This assignment is the first step in getting students to understand the meaning of argument in its most basic form.

Actual time for assignment: Approximately 2 class sessions. The construction of their sentence outline occurs as homework. Small groups are formed in a collaborative setting to analyze the arguments constructed by fellow students. Later analysis can also include the use of Toulmin's model of argument.

Materials required: Sample of completed outlines could be demonstrated through use of power point presentation or an overhead projector. If previous aids were not available, a clean chalkboard or Dry ease board will be sufficient.

Procedures:

Class should begin with a discussion of basic argument = a claim with support. The different types of claims should be explained and a clear example of a claim (assertion) should be provided. Before giving students the actual assignment, students are asked to do a small group exercise on generating claims on a fairly simplistic topic. The beginning activity is designed to allow students to come up with said reasons without the threat of not knowing how to respond. After the initial small group activity takes place students are then assigned the main activity (see attached assignment: Point of View).

The variations that occur with this assignment are with the choice of topics provided.

Useful questions and ways to guide the activity emerge from the class as students take the time to approach the activity. Grant it, sometimes students will express their frustration but I believe this can often serve as the catalyst to their discovery of what it means to critically think.

Cautions about what not to do: Instructors don't do the assignment for the students. Do not accept the response that they did not know what to do or they did not understand the assignment. They should at least try to generate one or two claims. Some small step can be the beginning for them to recognize the importance of thinking about their own

thoughts. Here again, the answer lies in the actual task of doing the assignment. The small groups that are formed to analyze each other's work should reveal the necessary steps needed to complete and solve the assignment.

Debriefing occurs on two levels: The small group feedback is one area and the second area is when the class is able to hear one or two students who made the assignment complete. Students are asked to present their final draft to the class. Students are asked to assess the student's speech by identifying the arguments heard.

Overall, I believe this is a great activity because it allows students to recognize the importance of complete sentences to reflect clear arguments. Also, the overall process is one that comes about due to student feedback and not simply the instructor's voice. In other words, this assignment allows for critical thinking to emerge from the students.

POINT OF VIEW SPEECH**OBJECTIVES:**

- To enhance the student's ability to analyze a claim.
- To enhance the student's ability to construct and present argument in a public setting.
- To enhance the student's understanding of the values and beliefs of the American culture.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Each student will be assigned two quotations. The student should select one as the topic for their Point of View speech.
- The student should construct a three to four minute speech giving their point of view to the claim advanced. The speech should be practiced and should meet the time requirements. Failure to do so will result in a grading penalty.
- The speech should adhere to the basic organizational pattern indicated below.

INTRODUCTION

- Present the claim to the class (word for word) - This is your Attention Gainer!
- Explain the claim to the class (define necessary words)
- Clearly state your reaction to the claim (Either "I agree" or "I disagree.")
- Forecast/Preview your Main points (Think about your Contentions)

BODY

- Student should give reasons for their reactions (fact- agree/disagree, value - agree/disagree, policy - agree/disagree)
- Said reasons should be sign posted (e.g., "first", "my second main point," etc.)
- Artistic (created by the student) forms of support are encouraged.
- Inartistic evidence (created by someone else) must also be included within the Body of this speech. At least two (2) sources are required. Make sure you cite sources both verbally and in writing.

CONCLUSION

- Student should review main points
- Student should restate topic

GRADING:

- Analysis of argument claim (accurate, thorough, critical)
- Construction of own argument (thesis/central idea and support)
- Ability to communicate ideas clearly
- Adherence to the requirements: Remember a minimum of two (2) source citations will meet the requirements for support material. Documented researched sources include newspaper articles, magazine articles, books, journals, pamphlets, etc.
- See criteria on the back.

* This assignment was adapted from an assignment provided by K. Baaske, Ph.D., (1990), Director of Forensics at California State University, Los Angeles.

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**BRYDGES
SPEECH 135**

**Name: _____
Time: _____**

POINT OF VIEW SPEECH EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

**RATING
E N**

Aroused audience interest and Clearly stated topic (quotation)

1 2 3

Explained topic to audience

1 2 3

Indicated a clear reaction/position ("I agree" or "I disagree")

1 2 3

Provided a clear preview of Main Points

1 2 3

BODY

Sign posted main points clearly

1 2 3

Organization of Main points clear

1 2 3

Supported main points sufficiently

1 2 3

Source citations provided

1 2 3

Analyzed topic (quotation) adequately

1 2 3

Connectives (Transitions and Internal Summaries provided)

1 2 3

CONCLUSION

Restated position/reaction clearly

1 2 3

Heightened audience interest

1 2 3

Restated topic clearly

1 2 3

DELIVERY:

Eye Contact

1 2 3

Facial Expressions (Enthusiastic, Serious, Nervous, etc.)

1 2 3

Body Posture

1 2 3

Gestures

1 2 3

Overall Adaptation to Audience

1 2 3

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Appendix 1

SAMPLE QUOTATIONS for Ecology

California is a fine place to live — if you happen to be an orange.

Fred Allen

Population growth is the primary source of environmental damage.

Jacques Cousteau

A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

The environment is everything that isn't me.

Albert Einstein

Air pollution is turning Mother Nature prematurely gray.

Irv Kupcinet

The first law of ecology is that everything is related to everything else.

Barry Commoner

The sun, moon and stars would have disappeared long ago had they been within the reach of predatory human hands.

Havelock Ellis

SAMPLE QUOTATIONS for Education

A good education should leave much to be desired.

(Alan Gregg)

Good teaching is 1/4th preparation and 3/4ths theatre.

(Gail Godwin)

Learning makes a man fit company for himself.

(Thomas Fuller)

He who would learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and walk and run and climb and dance; one cannot fly into flying.

(Friedrich Nietzsche)

Tell me and I'll forget. Show me, and I may not remember. Involve me, and I'll understand.

(Native American saying)

The true teacher defends his pupils against his own personal influence.

(A.B. Alcott)

By learning you will teach; by teaching you will learn.

(Latin proverb)

A university is what a college becomes when the faculty loses interest in students.

(John Ciardi)

Education is indoctrination, if you're white - subjugation if you're black.

(James Baldwin)



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